

A Neglected Chapter in the History
of Christian Zionism in America:
William E. Blackstone and
the Petition of 1916

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In the last two decades, the evidence of American Christian evangelical support of Israel has become increasingly noticeable. Evangelicals have taken up the Israeli cause, as they see it, and have been numbered among the most vociferous champions of Israel in America. Leading evangelists in the United States have promoted in both their sermons and writings the idea that Israel fulfills a role and purpose in God's plans for the End of Days.

The support of Zionism on the basis of messianic expectations has a long history in American Christianity. Even before the rise of political Zionism, there were American Protestants who promoted in words and deeds the idea that a Jewish state should be established in Palestine. With the emergence of the Zionist movement in America, Christian protagonists of Jewish restoration extended their help and support.

An outstanding example was William E. Blackstone, who in 1916 organized a "memorial" addressed to President Wilson that urged him to convene an international conference that would call for the granting of Palestine to the Jews. In addition to the petition, Blackstone secured the endorsement of major Protestant churches for his plan. The petition was initiated in collaboration with Zionist leaders in America, who were working to secure Wilson's support for the Zionist cause and, more specifically, for the type of concrete measures that would soon be endorsed by the Balfour Declaration.

Blackstone's initiative is a neglected chapter in this history of both American Zionism and American Christian support for Jewish restoration.

**WILLIAM E. BLACKSTONE AND PREMILLENNIAL
DISPENSATIONALISM**

William E. Blackstone was born in Adams, New York, on October 6, 1841.¹ He was a tinsmith, and Blackstone described his origins as humble. His

parents, Andrew and Sally Blackstone, were members of the local Methodist church, and their son was to remain a Methodist all his life. Although Blackstone never received any official training as a minister, he played an active part in church life, serving as a lay Bible teacher, a preacher and the superintendent of a Sunday school.

Blackstone never attended a college or a seminary, nor was he an intellectual or an academician. Nevertheless, he wrote, published and edited extensively, and he corresponded widely with prominent public figures, all in a style that would not have embarrassed someone with academic credentials. In his writings, Blackstone proved himself to have a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. His reading (when he found time for it) covered many areas of interest.²

During the Civil War, Blackstone volunteered to serve in the Union army in the Christian Commission (an organization similar to the YMCA or the Red Cross), and he was assigned to General Grant's headquarters.

In 1866, Blackstone married Sarah Louise Smith. The Blackstones led a happy family life, making their home first in Rockford, Illinois, where Blackstone sold agricultural insurance, and from 1870 in Chicago, then very much the boom city. There, Blackstone engaged in building and property investments and proved to be a successful businessman. It was during his years in Chicago that he adopted his premillennialist-dispensationalist beliefs.

Premillennialism, the belief in the imminent return of Jesus and in the establishment of his reign on earth for a thousand years, was a common tenet of faith in the early stages of Christianity. However, in the fifth century, Western Christianity became mostly amillennial in its outlook, and biblical passages with eschatological overtones have usually been interpreted since then in symbolic terms. Nevertheless, nonconformist messianic movements emerged throughout the Middle Ages; and the Reformation, in the sixteenth century, was accompanied by a strong wave of eschatological expectations, particularly among some of the more radical sects. Some of these groups anticipated the return of the Jews to the Holy Land and the rejuvenation of Israel in the imminent messianic era.³

The English civil war of the seventeenth century took place in the context of a new wave of premillennialist expectations. Messianic hopes that stressed the role and place of the Jewish people in the events of the End of Time may have influenced English government policy toward the readmission of Jews. Certainly, such views were at least partially effective in counteracting negative public sentiment on the issue.⁴

In the early nineteenth century, there was a dramatic rise in messianic expectations among Protestants, especially in the English-speaking world. It became not uncommon to interpret the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars as a sign that an era was ending and that the predicted eschatological events had begun.⁵

The new premillennialist ferment brought about a renewed interest in the Jews in evangelical circles, specifically in the prospect of their national restoration and eventual conversion.⁶ Messianic aspirations influenced, among other things, the discussion on Jewish liberties in Britain. And in 1840, at the urging of Lord Ashley Cooper (later Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, leader of the evangelical party in Britain and an ardent premillennialist), Lord Palmerston (the British foreign secretary)

ordered his ambassador in Constantinople to support the idea of large-scale Jewish settlement in Palestine. The geostrategic reasoning that accompanied this suggestion was that a Jewish Palestine would act as a buffer against the threat of a possible Egyptian invasion.⁷

It was in this atmosphere of intensified eschatological expectations in Britain that dispensationalism, a new school of belief in the Second Coming of Jesus, was born. Dispensationalism is not only an eschatological belief, but also a system of biblical hermeneutics and a philosophy of history. It was crystallized in the 1830s by John Nelson Darby (1800–1882) and the group he led, the Plymouth Brethren. Dispensationalists assert that human history is divided into a few ages or eras. The last age is the millennium, the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth, and the present era is believed to be the one before the last. God's plan for humanity in each successive age can be reconstructed from the biblical text.⁸ As against the traditional claim of Christianity to be the new Israel, the Plymouth Brethren recognized the Jewish people to be both the historical Israel and the object of the biblical prophecies foretelling a restored Davidic kingdom in the messianic age. This belief thus assigned to the Jews a crucial role in the events of the End of Time.

Darby advocated a theory that has served as an ideological cornerstone for dispensationalists ever since: that the true Church of Christ has nothing to do with the actual and official Church establishment. It is defined, instead, as the body of true believers and is composed of persons who have undergone a genuine inner religious experience that enables them to live saintly lives. They alone will be saved at the time of final judgment and enjoy eternal life.

Although Darby and the Plymouth Brethren gathered followers in Britain, dispensationalism never became a mass movement there as it was later to become in the United States. The dispensationalist conviction started to spread in America in the 1860s, gaining support among members of major Protestant denominations: Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists and Baptists.

Blackstone was among the early converts to the new messianic hope in the United States. His social circle, in general, was exposed to dispensationalism, and some of his close friends shared his convictions. He became associated with some of the leading protagonists of dispensationalism in America, such as Dwight L. Moody (1837–1899) and James H. Brookes (1830–1897), and he himself soon began to propagate his new belief. He lectured on the subject in churches and YMCA clubs; on his business travels, he tried to convince people he met of the imminence of Christ's return. In 1878, Blackstone decided to end his business activities altogether and to devote himself completely to his evangelical campaign. He explained this move in terms of a religious-mystical experience in which he responded to God's call.

In the years that followed, Blackstone published a series of books and pamphlets to help promote the premillennialist belief,⁹ the most important being *Jesus Is Coming*, first published in 1878. It was translated over the years into forty-two languages, including Yiddish and Hebrew. By the 1920s, it had a circulation of more than six hundred thousand copies.

THE PLACE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND OF ZIONISM IN BLACKSTONE'S ESCHATOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING

Blackstone, as did all dispensationalists, considered the Jewish people to be both the true heirs of biblical Israel and the object of the prophecies that predicted the restoration of the Jews to the land of Israel.¹⁰ The literal hermeneutics applied to the Bible by the dispensationalists resulted in the abandonment of the traditional claim by the Church to be the true Israel and in the recognition of the Jewish nation as still destined to play a central role in history.

Blackstone considered the Jewish refusal to accept Jesus as the Messiah to have been a tragic mistake, one that had devastating effects on their fate ever since.¹¹ It had, he wrote, "cost them centuries of sorrow."¹² Blackstone refers to the Jewish maltreatment of Jesus as well as to his crucifixion, suggesting that it was because the Jews had denied Jesus that his first appearance had not brought with it the establishment of the awaited kingdom.¹³ Nevertheless, although the Jewish people had been scattered among the nations, he argued, they had not been abandoned by God.¹⁴ In the current, sixth dispensation, "the Christian era" or "the times of the Gentiles," the Jewish people had played a passive role overshadowed by that of the Church.¹⁵ The current age, however, was but a "parenthesis" in the progress of the ages. And in the very last stage of this era, the Jews had again resumed a major role in history, as demonstrated by the Jewish national revival and the new Jewish settlements in Palestine.¹⁶

In Blackstone's view, the millennial kingdom would be preceded by a period of seven years, which he termed "the Great Tribulation."¹⁷ The bodies of believers in Christ would be "raptured" from earth, that is, they would meet Jesus in the air and remain with him there until his descent to earth. Once this had occurred, Israel, the Jewish nation, would undergo a period of turmoil: the time of Jacob's trouble.¹⁷ The Jews would return to the Holy Land in "unbelief" and would establish a state, but this would not yet be the desired kingdom. Except for a minority persecuted by their own brethren, the Jews would not accept Christ and would let themselves be ruled by Antichrist,¹⁸ "Then the Lord shall come with His saints down to the earth and destroy this lawless Antichrist, deliver Israel, who will then look upon Him they have pierced. . . . He will judge the living nations and establish His millennial kingdom."¹⁹

In the last dispensation, the millennium, the Jewish nation, or more precisely, that part of the Jewish nation (about one-third) that would survive the tribulation, would assume its place as the leading nation on earth, led by the son of David, Jesus the Messiah.

Blackstone occasionally published articles on Jewish religious themes in the *Jewish Era*, a magazine published by the Chicago Hebrew Mission. One finds in these articles a reflection of some of the ambivalence in Blackstone's attitude toward Judaism.²⁰ On the one hand, he believed that Judaism did not offer salvation and its adherents were doomed. Only in Christianity could Jews find true spiritual refuge and meaning. On the other hand, Jewish tradition—the beliefs, laws and

rites of the Jewish people—had kept them waiting for the Messiah and for the reestablishment of their ancient national home in Palestine. Thus, they were willing to fulfill the role intended for them in God's plan for human history.

By the same token, Blackstone reacted negatively to Reform Judaism as well as to liberal or assimilated Jews in general. The major problem with Reform or liberal (non-Zionist) Jews, so it seemed to Blackstone, was that they had turned their backs on their role and duty regarding the divine plan for the End of Days. They refused to participate in the Jewish national restoration, which was to serve as a means and preparation for the great events to come.²¹ As these groups of Jews were resistant to dispensationalist missionary efforts and would not accept Christ, they could be saved neither as Christians nor as Jews in the land of Israel who would eventually accept Jesus in the course of the Great Tribulation. They would perish. Blackstone considered evangelical Protestant Christianity to be the only religious belief that offered salvation to its believers. Atheists, heathens and non-Christians in general, as well as non-Protestant Christians or deviant Protestant groups such as the Seventh Day Adventists or the Mormons, were doomed to perish.²² Orthodox and Zionist Jews were a partial exception to this rule because of their special function in the advancement of the millennial kingdom.

Blackstone was a central figure in the field of missionary work among the Jews in America, and it was on his initiative that the Chicago Hebrew Mission was founded in 1887. Among other concerns, Blackstone, with other dispensationalist missionaries, sought to save individual Jews from the fate that was awaiting them at "the time of Jacob's trouble."

Although Blackstone was a confirmed supporter of the Zionist cause (and in 1916–1917 worked closely with the Zionist leadership in America), his theoretical approach toward the Zionist movement was ambivalent. On the one hand, Blackstone rejoiced over the activity of the Zionist movement and the Jewish resettlement in Palestine. They were "signs of the time" that indicated the imminent coming of Christ. They were a proof that the end was at hand. Blackstone referred to these signs time and again in his many articles and tracts.²³ On the other hand, he perceived Zionism as no more than a tool, a means, for the fulfillment of the divine plan for the End of Days. When discussing the Zionist movement and its achievements, he was careful to note that it could by no means fulfill God's plan for humanity, that it was only a step in the process of the advancement of the ages. The Zionist movement, he observed, was a secular movement that did not understand itself as a realization of biblical prophecy but rather sought to find a home and refuge for the Jewish nation.²⁴ This, however, it could not really achieve. A true home and refuge for the Jews, he insisted, could be established only when they accepted their true Messiah, Jesus Christ, as their savior.²⁵ The "Jewish problem" was, thus, not a matter of refuge and national survival, but a religious issue.

Blackstone believed that the United States had a special task to carry out in God's plan for humanity. God had assigned to America the role of a modern Cyrus—to assist in the Jewish restoration of Palestine. God, he believed, would judge America, among other things, according to the way it carried out that assignment.²⁶ He developed this belief gradually; it assumed its final shape during the First World War, which Blackstone considered to be the beginning of the end of the age.²⁷

The belief in the particular role assigned to the United States in helping prepare the stage for the arrival of Jesus was Blackstone's innovation and contribution to dispensationalist eschatological belief in America. It became part of premillennialist conviction in America, and it serves as the background for much of the support American fundamentalists have offered the Zionist cause.

THE PETITION OF 1891

In 1891, Blackstone organized a petition to U. S. President Benjamin Harrison. In it, Harrison was requested to take steps to obtain international consent for the restoration of Palestine to the Jews. The petition was signed by 413 eminent Americans: mayors, governors, congressmen, clergymen, judges, journalists, editors and publishers of leading newspapers and prominent businessmen.²⁸

Blackstone based his 1891 appeal on the unfortunate condition of the Jews in Russia, who lived under severe legal restrictions and had recently been subjected to harassment and mob violence. Although he undoubtedly cared for the fate of the Jews around the world, Blackstone was motivated, first and foremost, by his premillennialist hopes. Most of those who signed the petition, however, were not premillennialists, and it was Blackstone's humanitarian call to solve the problem of the Russian Jews that elicited such a broad-based response. "A million of exiles, by their terrible suffering, are piteously appealing to our sympathy, justice and humanity," declared the petition (see Appendix 1).²⁹

Blackstone's call to solve the humanitarian problem of Russian Jews by awarding them Palestine was couched in political, legal and economic arguments. On the political and legal level, he pointed out that his scheme had precedents, for new national states had been created in Europe with international consent and help in the nineteenth century. If the Congress of Berlin (1878) could decide in favor of the establishment of a Bulgarian state in what had been Turkish territory, the same could be done for a Jewish state in Palestine. As for the economics involved, Blackstone argued, world Jewry would help finance both the settlement of "their suffering brethren in their time-honored habitation" and compensate Turkey for "whatever vested rights by possession" it had in Palestine.

Although he based his plan for the restoration of Palestine to the Jews in large part on such rational and mundane factors, and although the petition contained no reference to premillennialist hopes, it nevertheless reflected a strong religious-biblical reasoning. The Jewish claim to Palestine, it asserted, was based on "God's distribution of nations." Blackstone saw it as the duty of "the Christian nations of Europe to show kindness to Israel." The Christian, biblical appeal of the petition, which was endorsed by so many notable Americans, reflected, among other things, the strength of the Bible as a factor in the thinking of Protestant America.

The 1891 petition was an impressive document that stirred a great deal of public interest at the time. However, the U. S. government did not then take up the cause of Jewish restoration to Palestine, and Blackstone's initiative soon faded into obscurity. Blackstone, however, was not discouraged. He continued trying both to persuade the American government to reconsider, and also to promote his ideas among

American Protestants. In 1903, through his efforts, the Methodist Ministers' Meeting in Chicago issued a resolution that called upon the American government to accept his plan.

THE 1916 PETITION

In 1916, Blackstone organized the presentation to President Woodrow Wilson of a new petition concerning the restoration of the Jews to Zion. This petition was probably more significant than the earlier one because it seems to have had a greater impact. Whereas the petition of 1891 was Blackstone's own initiative, he coordinated his efforts in 1916 with the leaders of the Zionist movement in America.³⁰ In the twenty-five years that had passed between the first petition and the second, great changes had taken place in American Zionism. It had developed from an insignificant group of a few dozen proto-Zionists who had little standing in American Jewish public life into an organization that included many thousands of members, and it had won the ardent loyalty of some of the most outstanding personalities in American Jewry. Among its members was Louis D. Brandeis, who of all President Wilson's Jewish associates was closest to him and enjoyed his esteem. Brandeis was chairman of the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs³¹ until July 21, 1916, when he became a Supreme Court justice. He continued to serve even then as the honorary president of the Provisional Executive Committee and remained its actual leader.

American Zionist leaders took an interest in, and responded favorably to, Blackstone's pro-Zionist activity. Nathan Straus (the owner of R. H. Macy and an active Zionist), Stephen Wise (the prominent New York rabbi and Brandeis's successor as chairman of the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs), Jacob de Haas (secretary of that committee) and Brandeis himself believed Blackstone's work to be of benefit to the Zionist cause. In 1916-1917, the American Zionist leaders were engaged in efforts to persuade the American government to support the Zionist cause, and they were eager to win Christian backing. They thus approached Blackstone with the idea of undertaking a new appeal similar to that submitted to President Harrison in 1891.³² In their letters to Blackstone, Straus and Brandeis urged him to concentrate on collecting Christian signatures for this petition.³³

The Zionist leaders were aware of Blackstone's premillennialist thinking from his books and pamphlets.³⁴ In his letters to them, he often discussed his religious convictions and his eschatological understanding of the role and fate of the Jewish people.³⁵ He even sent to Zionist leaders premillennialist material that was to be kept in a safe place and opened when the "rapture" took place.³⁶ His forecast that great turmoil awaited Israel in the wake of that event and that only a part of the Jewish people would survive the Great Tribulation was thus no secret. At a Zionist conference held in Los Angeles in January 1918, Blackstone explicitly stated his belief that those Jews who did not convert to Christianity or did not emigrate to Palestine were doomed to perish.³⁷

Zionists dismissed Blackstone's doctrine but were nonetheless prepared to work with him, perhaps without realizing the scope of his involvement in actual missionary work among the Jews. That premillennialist hopes motivated much of the. They, after all, were no experts on the Christian missions to the Jews. In addition, it should be noted that, although Jews were irritated by evangelizing attempts, they believed for the most part that very few Jews converted to Christianity out of conviction. Jews had developed a cynical attitude toward conversions to Christianity, the general notion being that they were caused by financial or social considerations rather than religious persuasion.³⁸

The Zionist leaders treated Blackstone as a desired and honored friend. He was invited to participate and speak at Zionist conferences.³⁹ Some Zionists, such as Nathan Straus, conducted a personal, albeit formal, correspondence with him, sending him holiday greetings and expressing concern when he was ill.⁴⁰ Beyond that, however, the relationship between Blackstone and this group of Zionist leaders may be characterized as one of mutual trust. Stephen Wise, for example, confided to him his bitterness toward his rival, Judah Magnes.⁴¹ Blackstone was entrusted with discreet duties as well;⁴² he, in turn, assigned to Brandeis the execution of his will, leaving his estate to the Zionist movement.⁴³ Blackstone also donated \$5,000 out of his own pocket to the emergency fund that was organized by the Provisional Executive Committee in order to help Jewish refugees and victims of the First World War in Eastern Europe and Palestine.⁴⁴ His gesture was almost unique among American dispensationalists of that period, who as a rule did not contribute money to Zionist efforts.

The 1916 petition differed in substance from that of 1891. The basic idea—that the government of the United States should initiate an international conference that would decide on the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jews—recurred in both documents. However, whereas the petition of 1891 took its point of departure from the plight of Russian Jewry, that of 1916 proceeded from the general proposition that the "civilized world seeks some feasible method of relieving the persecuted Jews" (see Appendix 2). The issue of Jewish emigration from Russia was not mentioned in the new petition. Between 1891 and 1916, almost two million Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe had entered the United States. The return of Palestine to the Jews was not perceived at this stage as having so urgent a connection with the redirection of the massive Jewish emigration wave. Precedents for the creation of national states on former Turkish territory were also omitted. Instead, Blackstone hinted at his understanding that the First World War would serve as a significant step in the advancement of the ages.⁴⁵

Blackstone, who was seventy-five in 1916, set out on a less ambitious task than in 1891, collecting only eighty-two signatures for the new petition. Its list of signatories, as before, included, among others, newspaper editors, bishops and bank presidents, though the collection of prominent names was much less impressive than that of the 1891 petition. An examination of the signatures reveals that Blackstone limited his efforts to four cities: Los Angeles, Chicago, New York and Ithaca, N. Y. He did not make a great effort to collect signatures and was not

concerned this time with quantity. That the idea of the restoration of Palestine to the Jews enjoyed strong support from the American public had already been proven as far as he was concerned.⁴⁶

More impressive than the actual signatures on the 1916 petition was the fact that it was officially endorsed by major Protestant organizations and presented to President Wilson by these church bodies as a proposal for solving the problem of Jewish suffering. On May 26, 1916, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., adopted Blackstone's petition as its own resolution⁴⁷ and, as such, presented it to President Wilson, who accepted it "in a very kindly manner."⁴⁸ A series of ministers' meetings in Los Angeles, then Blackstone's hometown, also endorsed and adopted his petition, as did the Methodist Ministers' Meeting of Southern California on May 1, 1916;⁴⁹ the Presbyterian Ministerial Association of Los Angeles on May 8, 1916;⁵⁰ and the Los Angeles Baptist Ministers' Conference on May 1, 1916.⁵¹ Blackstone was in close contact with the leaders of these major Protestant denominations, and the endorsements were to a large degree a result of his persuasion. An illustration of Blackstone's connections and influence with leaders of mainstream Protestant denominations is the fact that he organized a formal committee made up of distinguished Protestant churchmen to present the petition to President Wilson. The members of the committee were: Bishop J. W. Bashford of the Methodist Church; Dr. F. M. North, president of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America; Dr. Robert E. Speer, secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions; and Dr. John R. Mott, general secretary of the International Committee of YMCAs. (Dr. Mott received a Nobel Prize for Peace in 1946 for a lifetime's activity in the cause of Christian unity.) When Blackstone realized that he himself might not be able to participate in the presentation of the petition to the president, he authorized these church leaders to do so without him.⁵² Bishop Bashford, in particular, identified himself with Blackstone's cause and was his confidant concerning the 1916 petition.⁵³

Blackstone likewise negotiated for the support of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. (Many Protestant denominations in America participated in the Federal Council at the time, including some that did not endorse Blackstone's petition, among them the Lutheran General Synod, the Disciples of Christ and the Mennonite Church.) Blackstone's request, which was brought up in November 1916, was turned down by the Advisory Council of the Churches of Christ in America.⁵⁴ Although many of the church leaders who supported Blackstone were not dispensationalists, it seems that Blackstone's initiative found more willing and approving audiences among members of denominations that were, in general, part of the Reform tradition and had been influenced powerfully by nineteenth-century American revivalism, as was the case with Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists.

Blackstone's connections with leaders of mainstream Protestantism in America and his ability to bring many of them and their churches to support the idea of the Jewish restoration of Palestine manifests one difference between the American Protestantism of then and that of today. Although the modernist-conservative debate had already emerged, the borderline between liberal and evangelical Protestantism was not yet fully defined early in the century. Blackstone was able to

establish good connections with the leadership of the established Protestant churches in order to make them work for his cause. He had access to the heart of Protestant America and American culture in general. After the modernist-conservative debate reached its dramatic climax in the mid-1920s with the Scopes trial, evangelical Protestantism ceased to be an integral part of the mainstream of American culture, and it is doubtful if thereafter an evangelical activist could ever have mobilized liberal denominations to act to such an extent on behalf of his eschatological hopes. Blackstone was ready to have his petition presented to President Wilson by October 1916,⁵⁵ but the Zionist leadership kept him from doing so, claiming that the time was not ripe for a public presentation and that it should be formally delivered to Wilson when he could give it his full attention.⁵⁶

President Wilson not only knew about the petition, but saw it informally a few times. Blackstone sent him a copy of it for unofficial consideration. Wise had shown it to him twice "unofficially."⁵⁷ Wilson also received the petition with the endorsement of the three conferences of ministers in California and of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The official presentation of the petition, however, was constantly delayed, and it never actually took place.⁵⁸ Blackstone was willing to leave the matter of the public presentation of the petition to the Zionist leadership, claiming that he had "no personal ambition nor desires in reference to [it]" and that his only concern was that "it may accomplish the best results for the Jewish people in all the world."⁵⁹

It seems that Wilson was hesitant to accept Blackstone's petition publicly,⁶⁰ but he did treat it seriously. He suggested changes that he thought should be made in it.⁶¹ Moreover, if he had considered it an unimportant, eccentric document, he could easily have given his consent to its presentation. The president of the United States was used to accepting petitions on various matters, including many he cared little about. Harrison had accepted Blackstone's petition solemnly in March 1891, although he had no intention of carrying out its suggestions. One should note that the United States was not then in a state of war with Turkey and an official, ceremonious acceptance of a public demand to deprive the Turkish Empire of part of its territory probably seemed undesirable to Wilson.⁶² It was, it seems, at this time (1916-1917) that he developed a favorable attitude toward the Zionist movement and the idea of a Jewish national home in Palestine, but he did not publicly state his support of Zionism until September 1918. His pro-Zionist sentiments were kept hidden from his secretary of state, Robert H. Lansing, and from the State Department (and the American public), who knew little about Wilson's attitude and his consent to the Balfour Declaration.⁶³ It might be that his hesitation to accept the petition officially was due to his unwillingness to make his position public.

Although the petition was never formally presented, it nonetheless achieved its goal. It was intended, as far as the Zionist leadership was concerned, to show President Wilson that Protestant America favored the idea of the Jewish restoration to Palestine. Endorsed as it was by the Presbyterian Church and other church bodies, it served this purpose well. By the summer of 1917, the Zionist leaders were convinced of Wilson's support for their cause and saw no need to embarrass him by publicly presenting the petition.⁶⁴

What exact effect the petition had on Wilson is almost impossible to determine.

The president left no clue as to what part it played in his decision to support the Zionist cause. Historians who have written about Wilson's role in the origins of the Balfour Declaration were not even aware of Blackstone's petition and the endorsement it received from Protestant bodies.⁶⁵

Wilson was not a premillennialist,⁶⁶ and the eschatological reasoning Blackstone expressed in his private dispatches would hardly have impressed him. He was, however, a committed Protestant, the son of a Presbyterian minister, who had grown up in an evangelical atmosphere. Daily reading of the Bible was part of his routine. The Presbyterian Church that endorsed Blackstone's proposal was his own church. Wilson revealed his Christian feelings concerning the Jewish homeland in Palestine twice, though not in public. In a private talk with Rabbi Stephen Wise in June 1917, he remarked, "To think that I, the son of a manse, should be able to restore the Holy Land to its people."⁶⁷ In February 1920, when the issue of the borders of Palestine was discussed in Paris, a concerned Brandeis wrote to Wilson that it would be a betrayal of the promise of "Christendom" regarding a national Jewish home in Palestine if a decision was reached in favor of shrunken borders for Palestine. Wilson was moved and ordered Secretary of State Lansing to direct the American representatives in Paris to do their utmost to meet Brandeis's request.⁶⁸ However, if religious sentiment helped to shape Wilson's favorable attitude toward Zionism, he was careful not to reveal the fact publicly.

Not all the voices of Protestant America favored a national Jewish home in Palestine. A pro-Arab Protestant lobby was organized in 1919 and was active at the Peace Conference in Paris. It consisted of missionaries associated with the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut⁶⁹ who were committed to Arab nationalism and favored the idea of an Arab state in "Greater Syria," including Palestine.⁷⁰ In their view, the idea of a Jewish home in Palestine posed a threat to the Arab national hope and, perhaps, to their own interests in the Middle East as well. The pro-Arab Protestant group was one of the strongest and most energetic groups lobbying in Paris about the Palestine issue. One of its influential members was Cleveland H. Dodge, a close associate of Wilson who had backed him financially in his election campaign.⁷¹

Blackstone took no steps to create a lobby to counterbalance the pro-Arab one. He continued to write to Wilson and share his opinions with him. However, he regarded the fulfillment of the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of a Jewish home in Palestine as a fait accompli and did not see any need to fight on its behalf.⁷² In addition, it should be noted that an examination of Blackstone's tactics reveals that they never included an attempt to establish a permanent lobby. In 1891, once the petition had been presented, his initiative had faded away; in 1916, he followed the same path. Although many in the dispensationalist camp were enthusiastic about the development of the Zionist movement and approved of Blackstone's activity, no pro-Zionist organization emerged in the dispensationalist camp in this period. Blackstone acted on his own.

For the most part, Blackstone's pro-Zionist initiatives were soon forgotten. Historians of the Zionist movement, for example, have rarely been aware of his efforts and contributions. A temporary revival of interest in Blackstone took place in 1966. On the occasion of Israel's eighteenth anniversary and the seventy-fifth anniversary of Blackstone's petition of 1891, the America-Israel Society in the United States

organized memorial meetings for Blackstone and trees were planted in Israel in his memory.

CONCLUSION

William Blackstone's petitions were the earliest examples of a dispensationalist attempt to influence the American government to support the Zionist cause. In his political activity, Blackstone manifested goodwill toward the Jewish people and the Zionist movement. However, one should not mistake his primary motivation. He saw in the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine a means to an end: the coming of the Messiah and the millennial kingdom. Although he showed concern over the fate of the Jews, the physical and national survival of the Jewish people was not his ultimate aim.

In his active promotion of the Zionist endeavor, Blackstone was not immediately followed by other premillennialists. Although American fundamentalist-premillennialists reacted with great enthusiasm to the Zionist movement and its success, their support of the movement for many years remained largely passive.

One reason for this was the blow dealt in the mid-1920s to fundamentalism in America by the famous Scopes trial and its aftermath, which caused the movement to recede from the public arena.

This reality changed drastically in the 1970s when American fundamentalists emerged again as a powerful force in American public life. As fundamentalists have resumed a higher public profile, their favorable attitude toward the state of Israel has been translated into deeds, and they have become politically active on its behalf.

Although the international political situation has changed radically since 1916-1917, the current fundamentalist-premillennialist attitude toward Zionism is very much in keeping with Blackstone's understanding of the role and place of that movement in God's plans for humanity. Today's fundamentalists, likewise, do not see the Jewish state in terms of the security and safety of the Jews. Rather, the establishment of Israel is perceived as merely one step toward the realization of the millennial kingdom. The existence of the new state is no more than a temporary stage in the advancement of the eschatological timetable, a vehicle predestined to prepare the ground for the messianic age.

APPENDIX I

The Petition of 1891

What shall be done for the Russian Jews? It is both unwise and useless to dictate to Russia concerning her internal affairs. The Jews have lived as foreigners in her dominions for centuries, and she fully believes that they are a burden upon her resources and prejudicial to the welfare of her peasant population, and will not allow them to remain. She is determined that they must go. Hence, like the Sephardim of Spain, these Ashkenazim must emigrate. But where shall 2,000,000 of such poor people go? Europe is crowded and has no room for more

peasant population. Shall they come to America? This will be a tremendous expense and require years.

Why not give Palestine back to them again? According to God's distribution of nations it is their home, an inalienable possession from which they were expelled by force. Under their cultivation it was a remarkably fruitful land, sustaining millions of Israelites who industriously tilled its hillsides and valleys. They were agriculturists and producers as well as a nation of great commercial importance—the center of civilization and religion.

Why shall not the powers which under the treaty of Berlin in 1878 gave Bulgaria to the Bulgarians and Servia to the Servians, now give Palestine back to the Jews? These provinces, as well as Roumania, Montenegro, and Greece, were wrested from the Turks and given to their natural owners. Does not Palestine as rightfully belong to the Jews? It is said that rains are increasing and there are many evidences that the land is recovering its ancient fertility. If they could have autonomy in government the Jews of the world would rally to transport and establish their suffering brethren in their time-honored habitation. For over seventeen centuries they have patiently waited for such a privileged opportunity. They have not become agriculturists elsewhere because they believed they were mere sojourners in the various nations, and were yet to return to Palestine and till their own land. Whatever vested rights, by possession, may have accrued to Turkey can be easily compensated, possibly by the Jews assuming an equitable portion of the national debt.

We believe this is an appropriate time for all nations, and especially the Christian nations of Europe, to show kindness to Israel. A million of exiles, by their terrible suffering, are piteously appealing to our sympathy, justice and humanity. Let us now restore to them the land of which they were so cruelly despoiled by our Roman ancestors.

To this end we respectfully petition His Excellency Benjamin Harrison, President of the United States, and the Honorable James G. Blaine, Secretary of State, to use their good offices and influence with the Governments of their Imperial Majesties—

Alexander III, Czar of Russia;
Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Empress of India;
William II, Emperor of Germany;
Francis Joseph, Emperor of Austr[ost]-Hungary;
Abdul Hamid II, Sultan of Turkey;
His Royal Majesty, Humbert, King of Italy;
Her Royal Majesty, Marie Christiana, Queen Regent of Spain;

and the Government of the Republic of France, and with the Governments of Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Portugal, Roumania, Servia, Bulgaria, and Greece, to secure the holding at an early date of an international conference to consider the condition of the Israelites and their claims to Palestine as their ancient home, and to promote, in all other just and proper ways, the alleviation of their suffering condition.

APPENDIX 2

The Petition of 1916

WHEREAS the civilized world seeks some feasible method of relieving the persecuted Jews, and

WHEREAS we recognize the difficulty of harmonizing the widely divergent races of the multitudinous population of Russia and other nations, and

WHEREAS the governments of these nations should properly resent any foreign interference with their internal affairs, and

WHEREAS each of many nations can consistently point to the others as evidence that the Jews are not in its dominion alone, oppressed and slaughtered, and

WHEREAS the Jewish question is worldwide and demands an international remedy, and

WHEREAS the environment of the Jews is so fraught with alarming danger in many quarters of the world that humanity and the Golden Rule demand speedy action, and

WHEREAS the Jews, when expelled from Spain, were given an asylum in Turkey and have, since then, until the breaking out of the present unprecedented war, received such comparatively kind treatment in the Sultan's dominions as to give assurance that some satisfactory arrangement can now be made for their permanent resettlement in Palestine, and

WHEREAS a Memorial, copy of which is attached hereto, was presented by Mr. Wm. E. Blackstone, in 1891 to Hon. Benjamin Harrison then President of the United States entitled "What shall be done for the Russian Jews" in which it was prayed that the good offices of this Government might be used to intercede with the Governments of Europe for an international conference to consider the condition of the Jews and their right to a home in Palestine, and

WHEREAS the remarkable endorsement of the Memorial by eminent statesmen, clergymen, philanthropists, financiers, the religious and secular press of our Country, as well as our most prominent Jewish citizens, cannot fail to emphasize the wisdom of the plan proposed, and

WHEREAS the records of the State Department at Washington since the presentation of said Memorial evidence the development of a remarkable benign activity on the part of our Government in behalf of the Jews, and

WHEREAS we deem the imminent outcome of the present sad and destructive war a most opportune time for calling such an international conference of the Powers,

NOW THEREFORE, we the undersigned, representative individuals, societies, organizations and public officers in the United States, most respectfully commend the Memorial aforesaid and the attached letter of presentation and document attached, pertaining thereto, to the Honorable Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States and officers of our government, for consideration of the action therein prayed and such measures as may be deemed wise and best for the permanent relief of the Jews.

Notes

1. On Blackstone's life, see "William E. Blackstone: The Friend of Israel," *Jewish Era* 1 (1892), 75-76; Culter B. Whitwell, "The Life Story of William E. Blackstone and of 'Jesus Is Coming,'" *Sunday School Times*, 11 January 1936 (repr. *Jewish Era* 46 [1936], 64-67); "Their Works Do Follow Them," *Alliance Weekly*, 18 January 1936; Beth M. Lindberg, *A God-filled Life: The Story of William E. Blackstone* (Chicago: n.d.); Sandy Keck, "W. E. Blackstone: Champion of Zion," (a series of eleven articles), *American Messianic Fellowship Monthly* (1973-1974), 78-79.
2. E.g., Blackstone's letter to *Jewish Era* 11 (1901), 9.

3. See George H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: 1970).
4. See David S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England*, 1603-65 (Oxford: 1982).
5. Clarke Garrett, *Respectable Folly: Millenarians and the French Revolution in France and England* (Baltimore: 1975); W. H. Oliver, *Prophets and Millenialists: The Uses of Biblical Prophecy in England from the 1790's to the 1840's* (Auckland: 1978); John F. C. Harrison, *The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism 1780-1850* (London: 1979).
6. Franz Kobler, *The Vision Was There* (London: 1956); Meir Vereté, "Ra'ayon Shival yisrael banahshavah haproesantit beanglyah bhashanim 1790-1840," *Zivon* 33 (1968), 145-179; Barbara W. Tuchman, *Bible and Sword* (London: 1983), 158-223; Mel Scull, *Millennial Expectations and Jewish Liberties* (Leiden: 1978).
7. Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, 175-177.
8. On dispensationalism, see Clarence B. Bass, *Background to Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: 1960); Dave MacPherson, *The Incredible Cover Up: The True Story of the Pre-Trib Rapture* (Plainfield: 1975); Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Grand Rapids: 1978).
9. William E. Blackstone, *Satan, His Kingdom and Its Overthrow* (Chicago: 1900); *idem*, *The Millennium* (Chicago: 1904); *idem*, *The Heart of the Jewish Problem* (Chicago: 1905).
10. See, e.g., Blackstone, *Jesus Is Coming*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: 1908), 162-176.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Blackstone, *Heart of the Jewish Problem*, 16.
13. Blackstone, *Jesus Is Coming*, 84.
14. E.g., *ibid.*, 171, 234-235.
15. *Ibid.*, 222.
16. *Ibid.*, 236-241.
17. *Ibid.*, 174-176, 224-227.
18. Blackstone had thousands of copies of *Jesus Is Coming* in Hebrew, and other languages as well, stored in Petra in Transjordan. His intention was that Jews who would find refuge there at the "time of Jacob's trouble" would be able to discover the truth, accept Christ, and save themselves.
19. Blackstone, *Jesus Is Coming*, 226, 227.
20. E.g., William E. Blackstone, "The Jews," *Jewish Era* 33 (1924), 87.
21. E.g., William E. Blackstone, "Jerusalem," *Jewish Era* 1 (1892) 70-71.
22. William E. Blackstone, "Missions," in *Prophetic Studies of the International Prophetic Conference, Chicago, November 1886* (Chicago: 1886), 194-201; *idem*, *Satan, His Kingdom and Its Overthrow*, 36.
23. See, e.g., Blackstone, *Jesus Is Coming*, 208-209.
24. *Ibid.*, 240; William E. Blackstone, *The "Times of the Gentiles" and the Times of the End* (Chicago: n.d.) 18-19. There is no basis for Y. Malachy's claim that "in the last years of his life, disappointment at the secular character of Zionism and an intensification of his missionary strivings may be detected" (*American Fundamentalism and Israel* [Jerusalem: 1978], 141). Blackstone was an active missionary to the Jews and criticized the secular character of Zionism all along the way.
25. Blackstone, *Heart of the Jewish Problem*.
26. In a letter to President Wilson 4 November 1914, Blackstone wrote concerning Isaiah 18:

No nation in all past history, at all fits the prophecy, unless it be our own United States, which God has so wonderfully raised up, just before the harvest.

If our country is the prophecy's "Land shadowing with Wings," then the seventh verse indicates that we shall be specially used in the coming restoration of Israel to their God-given home in Palestine.

In a telegram to Warren C. Harding 30 December 1920, Blackstone wrote, "God has reserved our nation in special service in the impending crux of human history." Isaiah Eigh-

- teen." From copies in Blackstone's personal papers in the possession of the American Messianic Fellowship, Chicago [hereafter BPP/AMF].
27. See, e.g., *Jewish Era*, 26 (1917), 6. On Blackstone's interpretation of the First World War, see also the chapter "The War in the Light of Prophecy," in Carl F. Ehle, *Prolegomena to Christian Zionism in America: The Views of Increase Mather and William E. Blackstone Concerning the Doctrine of the Restoration of Israel* (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1977), 290-302.
 28. Among notable signers were Chief Justice Melville W. Fuller of the U.S. Supreme Court; Congressman (later president) William McKinley from Ohio; Governor William H. Russell of Massachusetts; Mayor Hugh J. Grant of New York City; Mayor N. Matthews, Jr., of Philadelphia; Congressman Robert R. Hitt, chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Congressman T. B. Reed, speaker of the House of Representatives; James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore; and financiers J. Pierpont Morgan, John D. Rockefeller and Cyrus McCormick. From a copy in BPP/AMF.
 29. The state of the Jews in Russia concerned the American public. The United States had intervened several times on behalf of Russian Jewry, and the House of Representatives passed a resolution in 1890 calling on the president to keep it informed about the persecution of Jews in Russia. See Cyrus Alder and Aaron M. Margalith, *With Firmness in the Right: American Diplomatic Action Affecting Jews, 1840-1940* (New York: 1946), esp. 217-221.
 30. Blackstone did establish contacts in 1891 with Zionist activists such as Adam Rosenberg, the secretary of Shave Zion in New York.
 31. The Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs was established in August 1914 to coordinate the activities of all Zionist groups and parties in the United States. The committee virtually absorbed the Federation of American Zionists. See Melvin I. Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* (New York: 1975), 118-163.
 32. See copy of Blackstone's letter to J. P. Tunnally, Wilson's secretary, 2 May 1916, BPP/AMF.
 33. Straus's letter 16 May 1916 and Brandeis's letter 22 May 1916, BPP/AMF. "Your memorial would be most effective if it derives its support from non-Jews," Brandeis wrote.
 34. See, e.g., a copy of Blackstone's letter to Brandeis 20 September 1918; Jacob de Haas's letter to Blackstone 7 March 1918; a copy of Blackstone's letter to Stephen Wise 25 February 1918, all BPP/AMF.
 35. See, e.g., a copy of Blackstone's letter to Stephen Wise, 30 June 1917, BPP/AMF.
 36. See, e.g., a copy of Blackstone's letter to Brandeis 20 September 1918 and his letter to Wise February, 1918, both BPP/AMF.
 37. *Jewish Era* 27 (1918), 44; Lindberg, *A God-filled Life*.
 38. See, e.g., David M. Eichhorn, *Evangelizing the American Jew* (Middle Village, N.Y.: 1978), 195.
 39. Blackstone participated in Zionist meetings in Philadelphia in July 1916 and in Los Angeles in January 1918.
 40. See, e.g.; Nathan Straus's yearly telegrams to Blackstone congratulating him on New Year's Eve, BPP/AMF.
 41. See Wise's letter of April 1918 to Blackstone, BPP/AMF.
 42. At one time, e.g., Marvin Lowenthal, the director of the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs asked Blackstone to publish a Zionist propaganda article under his name. See Lowenthal's letter to Blackstone 2 March 1917, BPP/AMF.
 43. The will was based on the assumption that the "rapture" would take place very soon. Blackstone believed that he and his family would be "raptured" from earth with all the true believers. In the meantime, until his return to earth, he wanted the Zionist movement to make use of his earthly possessions and commissioned Brandeis to be the trustee of the Milton Stewart Fund. Brandeis hesitated at first to accept Blackstone's will, but later consented. See copies of Blackstone's letters to Brandeis 18 April 1917 and 20 September 1918; Brandeis's letter to Blackstone 25 April 1917, BPP/AMF. See also Brandeis's letter to Blackstone 26 March 1917 in *Letters of Louis D. Brandeis*, 5 vols., ed. Melvin I. Urofsky and David W. Levy (Albany, N.Y.: 1971-1978), vol. 4, 278.

44. See Brandeis's letter 21 February 1917 to Blackstone thanking him for his contribution, BPP/AMF.

45. "Whereas we deem the imminent outcome of the present sad and destructive war a most opportune time for calling such an international conference of the Powers."

46. In a letter to President Wilson 16 November 1917, Blackstone wrote:

It would have been possible to have secured any number of signatures of the most representative character to the Memorial, but this was so evident that it was not necessary. The endorsement of the Presbyterian General Assembly, the Ministers' Meetings of the Methodists and Baptists, and many representative individuals and officials, evidence the general approval which the Memorial receives from our entire population (copy in BPP/AMF).

Cf. also the ninth clause of the 1916 petition, "WHEREAS the remarkable endorsement of the memorial. . . ."

47. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, n.s., vol. 16, August 1916 (Philadelphia: 1916), 185–186.

48. Letter of Rev. W. H. Roberts to John W. Baer, president of Occidental College, L.A., 28 August 1916, BPP/AMF.

49. See a copy of the resolutions of the Methodist Ministers' Meeting of Southern California in BPP/AMF.

50. See a copy of the resolution of the Presbyterian Ministerial Association of Los Angeles in BPP/AMF.

51. See a copy of the Los Angeles Baptist Ministers' Conference resolutions in BPP/AMF.

52. See a copy of Blackstone's letter to President Wilson 23 March 1917 in BPP/AMF. Later on, Dr. Arthur J. Brown replaced Dr. Speer as secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions and as a member of the committee for the presentation of the memorial to President Wilson. Dr. Mott's name was also deleted from the list of members of this committee. See a copy of Blackstone's letter to President Wilson, 14 June 1917, BPP/AMF.

53. See Blackstone's correspondence with Bishop Bashford in BPP/AMF, e.g., their exchange of letters 2–3 July 1917.

54. See Henry K. Carroll's letter to Blackstone 14 November 1916, BPP/AMF. Anita Libman-Lebeson and Timothy P. Weber were mistaken in naming the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America among the Christian bodies that endorsed the petition: Anita Libman-Lebeson, "Zionism Comes to Chicago," in *Early History of Zionism in America*, ed. Isidore S. Meyer (New York: 1958), 169; Timothy P. Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism, 1875–1982* (Grand Rapids: 1983), 140.

55. The petition was ready in May 1916, but Blackstone continued to collect signatures for it. He was ready to have the committee of Protestant church leaders present it to President Wilson in October 1916, but Wilson, who was busy with his election campaign, was not in Washington, D.C.

56. See Wise's letters to Blackstone 30 June 1917 and 17 September 1918; Nathan Straus's letter to Blackstone 16 May 1916; de Haas's letter to Blackstone 26 December 1916; and Brandeis's letter to Blackstone 21 February 1917, all in BPP/AMF. See also Brandeis's letters to Jacob de Haas, 8 May 1917, 7 June 1917 and 6 December 1917, in Urofsky and Levy, *Letters of Louis D. Brandeis*, vol. 4, 289, 296, 327.

57. Stephen Wise had shown it to the president "in an unofficial manner" twice, in June 1917 and September 1918. See Wise's letters to Blackstone 30 June 1917 and 17 September 1918, BPP/AMF. Blackstone sent a copy of the petition to Wilson in May 1916.

58. Historians who have not gone through Blackstone's personal papers mistakenly thought that Blackstone submitted the petition. E.g., Libman-Lebeson, "Zionism Comes to Chicago," in Meyer, *Early History of Zionism in America*, 163; Malachy, *American Fundamentalism and Israel*, 139; Lawrence J. Epstein, *Zion's Call: Christian Contributions to the Origins and Development of Israel* (Lanham: 1984), 112.

59. See a copy of his letter to Stephen Wise of 9 July 1917, BPP/AMF.

60. In his letter to Blackstone 30 June 1917, Stephen Wise wrote:

I had the honor of presenting in informal fashion to the President at the White House yesterday a copy of your petition. The President accepted it, but he felt that this was not the best time for the public or private presentation thereof. I think I have the right to say that the President is prepared to leave to Justice Brandeis the decision with respect to the most opportune time in which formally to present the petition to him. (BPP/AMF).

Wise refers to his meeting with Wilson in his autobiography (*Challenging Years* [New York: 1949], 189) but does not mention Blackstone and his petition.

Bashford, one of the people to whom Blackstone entrusted the presentation of the petition, wrote to Blackstone two days afterward and told him, "The whole matter of a public hearing depends upon President Wilson. At times he seems to want the public hearing and at other times he requests it to be postponed" (BPP/AMF).

61. See Robert Speer's letter to Blackstone 23 May 1917 and Bashford's letter to Blackstone 1 June 1917, BPP/AMF. Wilson discussed his suggestions for changes with Brandeis. His specific request was to drop the suggestion to put the future Jewish commonwealth in Palestine under "international control" and leave the control "undesignated." Brandeis was in favor of the same changes. See Brandeis's letter to Jacob de Haas 8 May 1917 in Urofsky and Levy, *Letters of Louis D. Brandeis*, vol. 4, 289. Brandeis obviously discussed the petition in detail with Wilson.

62. At one point Wilson sent an emissary, Henry J. Morgenthau, to the Middle East to try to persuade Turkey to sign a separate peace treaty with the Entente Powers. The British, who were eager to conquer Turkish territories, sent Chaim Weizmann to persuade Morgenthau to abandon his mission. Wilson was aware of Britain's attempt to use her promise to build a Jewish home in Palestine as a means of taking control of Palestine. Although he favored the Zionist idea, Wilson hesitated at first to give his approval to the issuing of the Balfour Declaration. See Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration* (London: 1961), 529; Peter Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America* (New York: 1983), 61–62.

63. See Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America*, 60–63. Cf. Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, 30.

64. Cf. Ben Halpern, *A Clash of Heroes: Brandeis, Weizmann, and American Zionism* (New York: 1987), 168.

65. See, e.g., Stein, *Balfour Declaration*; Isaiah Friedman, *The Question of Palestine, 1914–1918: British–Jewish–Arab Relations* (London: 1973).

66. "He [President Wilson] never once mentioned the Second Coming, and he always said that we need not worry about heaven—that would take care of itself—but had to be concerned about the problems of this world." Arthur S. Link, Wilson's biographer and editor of his papers, in a letter to Yaakov Ariel 18 July 1984.

67. Wise, *Challenging Years*, 186–187.

68. Frank E. Manual, *The Realities of American–Palestine Relations* (Washington, D.C.: 1949), 256–257.

69. Founded in 1866, known today as the American University of Beirut.

70. Joseph L. Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East: Missionary Influence on American Policy, 1810–1927* (Minneapolis: 1971). Grabill deals mostly with the missionaries' attempt to influence the Wilson administration.

71. On Dodge's connection with Wilson, see *ibid.*, 80–93.

72. See, e.g., *ibid.*, 178. Wilson, in fact, was not impressed by the efforts of the pro-Arab lobby and remained fully committed to his pro-Zionist promises.